

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An interactive contest system, comprising:
  - a computer readable storage,
  - a microprocessor,
  - 5 a contest server module comprising instructions executable by the microprocessor,
  - a first contest including first contest data stored in the computer readable storage, the first contest data representing first and second sets of works, the contest server module responsive to a first set of votes to identify a first selected
  - 10 work from the first set of works, the contest server module responsive to a second set of votes to identify a second selected work from the second set of works, the first and second sets of votes received within a predetermined time, and
  - a second contest including second contest data stored in the computer readable storage, the second contest data representing a third set of works
  - 15 including the first selected work and the second selected work, the contest server module responsive to a third set of votes to identify one of the third set of works.
2. The interactive contest system of Claim 1, also comprising:
  - an expert review module comprising instructions executable by the
  - 20 microprocessor,
  - expert review data stored on the computer readable storage, the expert review data representing an assessment of each of a fourth set of works, the fourth set of works including at least one work represented by the first contest data.
- 25 3. The interactive contest system of Claim 2, wherein each of the assessments includes an aspect score, the interactive contest system further comprising:
  - a filtering module comprising instructions executable by the microprocessor, the work filter applying a filter algorithm responsive to the aspect scores to identify works represented in said first contest data.
- 30 4. The interactive contest system of Claim 3, also comprising:

expert data stored on the computer readable storage, the expert data representing expert characteristics of at least one expert, and

a sneak peek pool comprising data representing work characteristics of a fifth set of works, at least one sneak peek work from the fifth set of works provided to at least one expert based on a correspondence between the characteristics of the one sneak peek work and the at least one expert.

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5. The interactive contest system of Claim 4, further comprising:

a database management module, the database management module managing data representing information about voters, about contests, and about works, the database management module responsive to administrative commands to retrieve, save or change data representing voter, contest or work information.

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6. The interactive contest system of Claim 1, further comprising:

a digital rights management module, the digital rights management module coupled to the contest server to authorize the distribution of content and prevent unauthorized copying.

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7. The interactive contest system of Claim 1, further comprising:

an advertising module, the advertising module coupled to the contest server to present advertiser information to voters.

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8. The interactive contest system of Claim 1, further comprising:

an electronic commerce module, the electronic commerce module coupled to the contest server to provide secure monetary transactions.

9. A virtual expert review system and marketing machine, comprising:

an expert review module, the expert review module accessible by an expert over a network, the expert selected based on expert information associated with the expert, the expert review module providing at least one selected work to the expert for expert review based on a correlation between work information associated with the work and expert information, the expert review module receiving an expert review of the selected work including at least one aspect score, and the expert review module associating the expert review with the selected work.

10. The virtual expert review system and marketing machine of Claim 9, further  
5 comprising:

a contest server, the contest server including a computer readable storage  
and a microprocessor, the contest server serving at least one contest to at least  
one voter, the contest server coupled to the expert review module to receive  
selected works for submission to contests.

11. The virtual expert review system and marketing machine of Claim 10, further  
10 comprising:

a contest creation module, the contest creation module providing at least  
a first form to the contest server, the contest server serving the first form to at  
least one contest provider, the contest creation module creating a set of contests  
15 on the contest server based on the contest provider selections on the first form;  
and,

a contest management module, the contest management module  
providing at least a second form to the contest server, the contest server serving  
the second form to at least one contest provider using a network enabled access  
20 program, the contest management module managing a set of contests on the  
contest server based on the contest provider selections on the second form.

12. The virtual expert review system and marketing machine of Claim 10, further  
comprising a contest containing at least two rounds of at least one room, each room  
contains at least two works, wherein in each round: a voter votes for at least one work in  
25 at least one room of each round of the contest, the contest server selecting one work  
from each room based on a voting algorithm, the selected work continuing in the next  
contest round, until only one work remains.

13. A contest server, the contest server comprising:  
a contest including at least two contest rounds of at least two contest  
30 rooms, each contest room including at least two content works, the contest

server serving the contest to a voter, the contest server receiving at least one vote from the voter for at least one content work in at least one content round.

14. A virtual expert review system and marketing machine, comprising:

a computer readable storage;

expert information including information identifying experts and an expert selection criterion, the expert information stored in the computer readable storage;

voter information identifying voters, the voter information stored in the computer readable storage;

a producer submission module, the producer submission module responsive to a request to submit content to serve a content submission page prompting a producer for content information, the content submission module responsive to content information received in response to the prompting to store in the computer readable storage at least part of the content information;

an expert review module, the expert review module responsive to the receipt of the content information to notify a set of the experts that content is available for expert review, the expert review module selecting each of the set of experts by scanning the content information and using the expert selection criterion, the expert review module responsive to a review request from an expert to serve a content review page prompting an expert for review information, the expert review module responsive to review information received in response to the prompting for review information to store in the computer readable storage at least part of the review information, the stored review information including ranking data representing a ranking of a content;

a filtering module responsive to a satisfaction of a filtering threshold to access stored review information and to select a set of top scoring content by scanning ranking data in the review information and selecting each content work having corresponding ranking data satisfying a selection algorithm, the filtering module adding each of the selected top scoring content work to a contest pool;

and,

a contest module responsive to a satisfaction of a contest period threshold to serve to each of a set of voters identified by the voter information a contest page presenting a visual representation of at least a pair of content works from the contest pool and to prompt each of the set of voters to vote for at least one of the visually represented content works, the contest module responsive to a satisfaction of a contest period threshold to select at least one winning content work from the content in the contest pool by scanning votes received from the set of voters, the contest module responsive to requests to view the contest to serve a contest presentation page visually representing a current state of a contest.

15. A contest system, comprising:

a contest server, the contest server serving at least one contest; the contest comprising at least one round with at least one room with at least two content works therein;

vote data representing one or more received votes for one or more works in at least one room of at least one contest round; and

a selection algorithm responsive to the vote data to select at least one work from each room of each round of each contest.

16. A contest, the contest comprising:

a computer readable storage;

contest data representing a first and a second contest round, a first and a second contest room for each contest round, and a first and a second content work for each contest room, the contest data stored on the computer readable storage; and

vote data representing received votes sufficient to select at least one of the first and second content works for each contest room for each contest round.

17. The contest of Claim 16, further comprising:

an expert review module;

a third work submitted for a contest;

a fourth work submitted for a contest, the expert review module selecting experts for each of the third and fourth works, the expert review module

receiving expert review data including a first aspect score for the third work and a second aspect score for the fourth work;

a contestant pool including data representing the third and fourth works;  
and

5 a filter selecting the third work to be represented in a third contest round, the selection based on the first aspect scores, the filter removing the fourth work from the contestant pool after a predetermined time period without being selected for representation in any contest round.

18. The contest of Claim 17, further comprising:

10 a set of genres, the third work categorized by a first one of the genres and one of the experts categorized by the first one of the genres, the selection of the expert to review the third work based on categorization by the first one of the genres.

19. A virtual expert review and contest marketing machine, comprising:

15 producer submission means for content producers to submit content works for expert review;

expert review means for obtaining expert review of submitted content works;

20 filter means for filtering expert reviewed content works to select works to be represented in a contest; and,

contest means for representing contestant works in multi-level contests, for receiving votes on the contestant works and for selecting a winning contestant work.

20. A contest method, comprising:

25 submitting first, second, third and fourth works for representation in a contest;

automatically generating representations of first and second contests, the first contest representing the first and second works, and the second contest representing the third and fourth works, the first and second contests substantially of the same duration and substantially coterminous;

30 receiving one or more votes for the first work in the first contest;

receiving one or more votes for the third work in the second contest;  
automatically generating a third contest representing the first work and  
the third work;

receiving one or more votes for the first work in the third contest; and

5 automatically selecting the first work as a winning work.

21. The contest method described in Claim 20, further comprising:

selecting the first, second, third and fourth works from a pool of at least  
five works at a time prior to the submitting of the first, second, third and fourth  
works for representation in a contest, the selecting based upon comparison of  
ranking information for each work in the pool.

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22. The contest method described in Claim 20, further comprising:

submitting fifth and sixth works for representation in a fourth contest;

submitting sixth and seventh works for representation in a fifth contest;

and

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receiving at least one vote for the fifth work after the generating of the  
third contest and before the selecting of the first work as a winning work.

23. The contest method described in Claim 20, further comprising:

providing to one or more users access to a description of the first work,  
access to the number of votes received for the first work, or access to an offer for  
the sale of goods or services corresponding to the first work.

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